

SOLOMON'S SONG

TRANSLATED FROM THE

H E B R E W

BY THE REVEREND

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O X F O R D

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THE Poem before us, is an Epithalamium, written by Solomon, on his marriage, as some have supposed, with the daughter of Pharaoh.

In the disputes concerning the mystical sense of it, my design, which is only to translate the poem, leads me not to engage.

Dr. LOWTH, the present Bishop of London, in his valuable lectures on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, has fully discoursed on this Song.

P E R S O N Æ

S O L O M O N

Q U E E N

C H O R U S O F D A M S E L S

M U T Æ

C H O R U S O F M E N

SOLOMON'S SONG.

FIRST CHAPTER.

A SONG OF THE SONGS OF SOLOMON. 1

LET him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth ; 2

For good is thy love above wine.

Like the scent of thine own sweet perfumes 3

Is thy name, a perfume poured out ;

Therefore the virgins have loved thee.

Draw me after thee. We will run. 4

Into his chambers hath the King led me.

We will exult in thee and rejoice :

Thy love we will praise above wine :

The virtuous have loved thee.

Black am I, but lovely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, 5

B

Like

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

Like the spice trees of Kedar,
like the tapestries of Solomon.

Regard it not that I am tawny, 6

That the sun hath looked upon me :

The sons of my mother were angered against me ;

They made me keeper of the vineyards :

The vineyard that was mine I have not kept.

O tell me, thou, whom my soul loveth, 7

Where thou feedest thy flocks,

Where thou ledest them to lie down at noon :

Why must I be as a wanderer

Amongst the flocks of thy companions ?

If thou knowest not, O most beautiful of women, 8

Go forth in the footsteps of the flock,

And feed thy kids

Near the tents of the shepherds.

To my horses in the chariots of Pharaoh 9

I compare thee, my beloved.

Beautiful

S O L O M O N'S S O N G.

Beautiful are thy cheeks with rows, 10

Thy neck with chains.

Rows of gold we will make for thee

With studs of silver.

While the King is at his banquet, 12

My spikenard spreads it's fragrance.

A bag of myrrh is my beloved unto me, 13

Between my breasts shall he repose.

A bunch of the camphire-tree is my beloved unto me, 14

In the vineyards of Engedi.

Lo! beautiful art thou, my love! 15

Lo, beautiful ! thine eyes are like doves.

Lo! beautiful art thou, my beloved, and pleasing; 16

And our couch is green :

The beams of our house are cedars,

Firs, our roof.

SECOND

SOLOMON'S SONG.

SECOND CHAPTER.

I AM a rose of Sharon, 1
A lily of the vallies.

Like a lily among the thorns 2
Such is my beloved among the damfels.

Like an apple tree among the trees of the wood, 3
Such is my beloved among the youths :
Under it's shade, I longed, and sat down ;
And it's fruit was delicious to my palate.

He led me into the house of wine, 4
And his banner against me was love.

Support me with cups, 5
Around me strew apples,
For faint with love am I.

His left hand is under my head, 6
And his right doth embrace me.

I adjure

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerufalem, 7
By the roes and the hinds of the field,
That ye disturb not, neither rouse
The beloved, till herself be inclined.

The voice of my beloved ! behold him ! 8
He cometh bounding over the mountains,
Springing over the hills.

My beloved is like a deer, 9
Or a stag's fawn.

Behold him standing behind our wall,
Looking out from the windows,
Sparkling at the lattice !

My beloved answered, and said to me, 10
Get thee up, my companion,
My lovely one, come away :

For, lo ! the winter is past, 11
The rain is over, is gone,

The flowers are seen on the earth, 12

C

The

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

The season of the song is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land :
The fig tree puts forth it's green figs, 13
And the vine's tender grapes yield a fragrance :
Arise, my companion, my fair one, and come.

My dove is in the clefts of the rock, 14
In a hollow of the precipice.
O, let me behold thee,
Let me hear thy voice !
For thy voice is sweet,
And thine aspect, beautiful.
Catch for us the foxes, 15
The little foxes that destroy the vines,
And our vines' young grapes.
My beloved is mine, and I am his ; 16
He feedeth among the lilies.
Till the day breathe, till the shades be dispersed, 17
Return ;

SOLOMON'S SONG.

Return ; be like the roe, my beloved,
Or the stag's fawn,
On the mountains of Bether.

THIRD

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

T H I R D C H A P T E R .

O N my bed in the night, 1
Him, whom my soul loveth, I sought:
I sought him but I did not find him.
I will arise now, and go about, 2
In the city, in the lanes, and in the streets;
I will seek him whom my soul loveth.
I sought him, but I did not find^l him.
The watchmen going round in the city met with me: 3
Him, whom my soul loveth, have ye seen?
But a little way had I passed on from them, 4
When him, whom my soul loveth, I found:
I seized him, and would not let him go,
Till I had led him into the house of my mother,
And into the chamber of her, who gave me birth.
I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerufalem, 5
By the roes and the hinds of the field,

That

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

That ye disturb not, neither rouse
The beloved, till himself be inclined.

Who is she rising up out of the desert 6

Like columns of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the powders of the spice merchant ?

Behold, Solomon's couch ! 7

Sixty chieftains around it
From the mighty of Israel !

All of them men of the sword, 8

expert in war,

Each his sword by his thigh,
against the peril of night !

Solomon the King made himself, 9

Of the trees of Libanon, a marriage bed :

It's pillars he formed of silver, 10

It's covering of gold, it's bottom of purple ;

D

It's

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

It's middle was strewed with love
by the damsels of Jerusalem.

Go forth, ye daughters of Sion,
and behold Solomon the King
In the diadem with which his mother
crowned him,
On the day of his nuptials, and on the day
of the gladness of his heart.

II

FOURTH

SOLOMON'S SONG.

FOURTH CHAPTER.

LO, beautiful art thou, my love, lo, beautiful ! I

Thine eyes within thy locks are like doves :

Thy hair is like a flock of goats

That browse about mount Gilead.

Thy teeth are like the shorn flock 2

Which have come up from the washing place,

All of which have twins,

And none among them is bereaved.

Like the twice-dyed thread of crimson are thy lips, 3

And thy language is sweet :

Like a slice of the pomegranate

are thy temples amidst thy locks.

Thy neck, is like the tower of David 4

Built for an armoury ;

A thousand shields are hung up against it,

All, bucklers of the mighty.

Thy

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

Thy two breasts are like two young fawns, 5
Twins of the roe, that feed among the lilies.

Until day breathe, and the shades be dispersed, 6
I will betake me to the mountain of myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.

Thou art all beautiful, my love, 7
And spot there is not in thee.

With me from Libanon, O spouse, 8
With me from Libanon, come away ;

Look from the height of Amana,
From the top of Shenir and Hermon,
From the dwellings of the lions,
from the mountains of the panthers.

Thou hast ravished my heart, 9
O my sister, O spouse,

Thou hast ravished it at once with thine eyes,
At once with the chain round thy neck.

How sweet is thy love, O my sister, O spouse, 10
How much better than wine is thy love,

And

SOLOMON'S SONG.

And the odour of thy perfumes than all spices !

Thy lips, O spouse, distil honey from the comb, 11

Honey and milk are under thy tongue,

And the scent of thy garments

is like the fragrance of Libanon.

Thou art a garden locked up, O spouse my sister, 12

A spring closed, a fountain sealed.

Thy branches shall be 13

as an orchard of pomegranates,

With fruit the most delicious ;

Camphire trees with shrubs of nard,

Spikenard and saffron, 14

sweet cane and cinnamon,

With all trees of frankincense :

Myrrh and aloes,

With all the choicest of spices ;

A garden fountain, a well of waters, alive 15

And flowing from Libanon.

E

O North

SOLOMON'S SONG.

O North wind rise, and come thou, O South, 16
Blow through my garden, let it's fragrance go forth.
Let my beloved come to his garden,
And eat the most delicious of it's fruits.

FIFTH

SOLOMON'S SONG.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

I AM come into my garden, O spouse my sister, 1
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice,
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey,
I have drunk my wine with my milk.
Eat, companions, drink,
Inebriate yourselves, my beloved.

I sleep, but my heart watcheth. 2
The voice of my beloved knocking!

Open to me, my sister,
My friend, my dove, my perfect one:
My head is covered with dew,
My hair with the drops of night.

I have taken off my garment, 3
How can I put it on?

I have

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

I have washed my feet,
How can I foil them ?
My beloved put his hand through the door hole : 4
My heart was in confusion thereat.
I arose to open to my beloved ; 5
And my hands dropped myrrh,
And my fingers liquid myrrh
That was on the handles of the bolt.
I opened for my beloved ; 6
But my beloved had withdrawn himself, was gone.
My soul, by calling him, fainted.
I fought him, but I could not find him,
I called him, but he did not answer me.
The watchmen going their rounds in the city, 7
found me ;
They smote me, they wounded me ;
The keepers of the walls, took my veil from off me.
I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerufalem, 8
If

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

If ye find my beloved,
That ye tell him, how I languish with love.

What is thy beloved above others, 9
O, thou most beautiful of women,
What is thy beloved above others,
that thus thou hast adjured us ?

My beloved is fair and ruddy, 10
distinguishable among ten thousand,
like him who carrieth the banners.

His head is as finest gold,
His clustering locks are jetty as the raven.
His eyes are like pigeons over torrents of water, 12
That bathe themselves in milk,
and dwell among the ripe corn.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, 13
as flowers yielding perfume ;

F

His

SOLOMON'S SONG.

His lips, lilies, distilling liquid myrrh ;
His hands are rounds of gold, set with beryls ; 14
His body, polished ivory overlaid with sapphires ;
His legs are pillars of marble 15
 founded on bases of gold ;
His aspect is like Libanon,
 surpassing as the cedars ;
His mouth is sweetness, 16
 yea every part of him is lovely.
Such is my beloved, such is my friend,
 O ye daughters of Jerusalem.

SIXTH

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

S I X T H C H A P T E R .

W H I T H E R gone is thy beloved, 1
O thou most beautiful of women,
Which way turned is thy beloved ?
and with thee we will seek him.

My beloved is gone down into his garden, 2
to the beds of spices ;
To eat in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine : 3
he is eating among the lilies.

Handsome, my dear, art thou, as Tirzah, 4
Beautiful as Jerusalem,
Awe-striking as armies when their banners fly.

Turn

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

Turn away from me thine eyes, 5
For they have overcome me.

Thy hair is like a flock of goats
Which feed about mount Gilead.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep 6
That have come up from the washing place ;

All of which have twins,
And none among them is bereaved.

Like a flice of the pomegranate 7
Are thy temples amidst thy hair.

There are fixty queens, 8
And eighty concubines,

And damfels without number ;

She alone is my pidgeon, my perfect one, 9
She, the delight of her mother,

The darling of her who bare her.

The damfels beheld her, and blessed her,

The queens and concubines, and they praised her.

Who

SOLOMON'S SONG.

Who is she that is seen like the morning, 10
Beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun,
Awe-striking, like armies with their banners?

To the nut garden I went down 11
To look after the fruits of the valley;
To see whether the vine shot,
The pomegranates flourished.
Unexpectedly methought were drawn out for me 12
The chariots of my loyal people.

Return, return, O Shulamite, 13
Return, return, and let us look on thee.

Wherefore should ye look on the Shulamite?
She is as the trumpet, when armies stand ready for battle.

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

S E V E N T H C H A P T E R .

HOW beautiful are thy feet I
In sandals, O royal daughter !
The rounds of thy thighs are like collars
The work of an artist's hands.
Thy navel is like a round goblet 2
Intended to hold the draught,
Thy belly as a parcel of corn
Set about with lilies.
Thy two breasts are like two young fawns, 3
Twins of the roe.
Thy neck is like a pillar of ivory ; 4
Thine eyes are as fishponds in Heshbon,
At the gate of Bethrabbim ;
Thy nose is like the tower of Libanon
Which looketh towards Damascus.
Thy head upon thee is like Carmel, 5
And

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

And the hair of thy head is like purple :
The King is bound captive in it's flowing tresses.
How beautiful, and how delightful art thou, 6

O love, in thy charms !
That thy stature, is like a palm tree, 7
And thy breasts are as clusters of grapes.

I said, I will climb up into the palm tree, 8
will take hold of it's branches.

And now shall thy breasts
be like bunches of the vine,
And the fragrance of thy face like that of apples ;
Thy mouth also, like wine the most delicious, 9
That goeth down sweetly and well,
Giving speech to the lips of those who sleep.

I am my beloved's, and to him obedient is my will. 10
Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, 11
Let us lodge in the villages.

In

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

In the morning let us go to the vineyards, 12

See whether the vine shoot,

The little grape appear, the pomegranates flourish ;

There will I give thee my love.

The mandrakes yield their fragrance, 13

And at our gates, all fruits the most choice,

New and old,

My beloved, I have prepared for thee.

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

E I G H T H C H A P T E R .

O T H A T thou wert as my brother 1

That sucked my mother's breasts !

Should I find thee abroad, I would kiss thee,

Nor reproach should I suffer.

I would lead thee, I would cause thee to go, 2

To the house of Talmadni my mother ;

I would make thee drink of spiced wine,

Of the juice of my pomegranate.

His left hand should be under my head, 3

And his right should embrace me.

I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerufalem, 4

By the roes and the hinds of the field,

That ye disturb not, neither rouse

The beloved, till himself be inclined.

H

Who

SOLOMON'S SONG.

Who is she ascending from the desert 5
Leaning on her beloved ?

Under the apple tree I lifted thee up ;
There was thy mother in travail with thee,
There was she in travail, she brought thee forth.
Set me as a seal upon thy heart, 6
As a seal upon thine arm ;
For powerful as death is love,
Merciless as the grave is jealousy ;
The coals thereof, are coals of fire, the flame of God.
Many waters would not be able 7
To extinguish love ;
Floods even would not overwhelm it.
If a man should give all the riches of his house
Against love, men would utterly despise him.

We

SOLOMON'S SONG.

We have a sister who is little, 8
And hath not breasts:
What shall we do for our sister
In the day, when it shall be spoken of concerning her?

If she be a wall, 9
We will build against her, a tower of silver:
If she be a gate,
We will raise bulwarks against her
with planks of cedar.

I was as a wall, and my breasts were as towers; 10
Then was I in his eyes, as one who had found favour.
Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-Hamon; 11
He committed the vineyard to keepers;
Each was to yield him, for the fruit of it,
a thousand pieces of silver.

The

S O L O M O N ' S S O N G .

The vineyard which I have, is before me; 12

The thousand are for you, Solomon,

And for the keepers of it's fruit, two hundred.

O thou, who dwellest in the gardens, 13

Thy companions hear,

Let me hear, thy voice.

Make hafte, my beloved, and be thou like to 14

The roe or the stag's fawn

On the mountains of spices.

NOTES

N O T E S.

F I R S T C H A P T E R.

VERSE 1. A song of the songs. השירים should I think be translated "of the songs," instead of, "of songs." Because the article ה is prefixed to שירים.

Ezek. xxvi. 7. מלכים of kings.

Gen. xiv. 17. המלכים of the kings.

So השירים "of the songs;" one of the songs; one of the thousand and five which Solomon composed. 1 Kings iv. 32.

3. Like the scent—instead of "because of the scent" for ל, here prefixed, has the signification of "like" as in Deut. xi, 18, לטוטפת "like frontlets."

4. We will praise—instead of "we will remember" for נזכירה being in the Conjugation Hiphil does not mean "to remember," but "to cause to be remembered." We will cause it to be remembered, that is, we will praise or celebrate it. Thus in Isaiah xxvi. 13. נזכיר שמך we will "celebrate" thy name.

Ibid. We will run. These words seem addressed to the Chorus.

5. Spice trees of Kedar—instead of "tents of Kedar." The word אהלי signifies "trees," Numb. xxiv. 6. It is true, it signifies also "tents." But I think in this place, the former meaning is to be prefer'd: it being more likely that a beautiful woman should be compared to a tree, than to a tent. Ulysses compares Nauficæa to a young palm tree.

N O T E S.

Γενέμαι σε, ἄνασσα * * * *

Δηλῶ δὴ πότ' ἔτοιον Ἀπολλωνος παρὰ βωμῶ

Φοινίκος νεὸν ἔρνος ἀνερχομένον ἐνόησα·

Hom. Od. vi. 162.

Once did I in the Delian isle,
A palm's fair sapling see,
That near Apollo's altar grew,
In form, O queen, like thee.

5. Like the tapestries of Solomon—instead of “like the curtains of Solomon.” The word *וריעה* is generally translated, Aulæum: which Cicero uses to signify tapestry. Cic. pro Cæl. One does not readily see how a woman can be like “curtains:” but she may easily be like some of the beautiful figures on fine tapestry.

6. Regard it not that I am black—instead of “look not upon me because I am black.” *ראה* respexit, ne respiciatis, mind it not.

9. To my horses in the chariots of Pharaoh. To “my horses” instead of, “to a company of horses.” For *י* is here suffixed to *סוסה* and signifies “my”.

It might seem strange that Solomon should speak of “his horses” in Pharaoh's chariot, did we not learn 2 Chron. i. 16, 17. that Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver.

Theocritus, speaking of Helen, makes a similar comparison.

Ὡς—ἀρματι Θεσσαλος ἵππος.

Idyl. xviii. 30.

10. Thy neck with chains—instead of “with chains of gold.” It does not appear by any expression in the Hebrew, that they were chains of gold. Were it necessary to take any liberty, they should rather be called, chains of pearl: pearls drilled, and strung on thread: for *הרין* in rabbinical writings signifies, according to Buxtorf, to string.

15. Thine

N O T E S.

15. Thine eyes are like doves—instead of “thou hast dove’s eyes.” For the word **יונים** is in the plural number.

He seems to compare her eyes, not to the eyes of doves, but to doves themselves, the emblems of love.

עיניך יונים Thine eyes doves.

Ch. vii. 4. **עיניך ברכות** Thine eyes fishponds.

As we translate the one, “thine eyes are like fishponds,” and not “thou hast fishponds’ eyes,” so I think we must translate the other, “thine eyes are like doves,” and not “thou hast doves’ eyes.”

17. The beams of our house are cedars. Cedars instead of “cedar.” The word **ארזים** being in the plural number.

Ibid. Firs, our roof—instead of “and our rafters of fir:” **ברתים** being also in the plural; and concurring with what was said in the former verse, to shew, that they were not in a house, but a grove; where the heads of the firs and of the cedars, are poetically called, the beams, and the roof of their chamber.

Thus Milton, describing Adam’s bower.

* * * the roof,
Of thickest covert, was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle; and what higher grew,
Of firm and fragrant leaf.

Par. Lost, iv. 692.

S E C O N D

N O T E S.

S E C O N D C H A P T E R.

VERSE 1. I am a rose of Sharon. Sharon was a canton of Palestine.

3. Under it's shade, I longed, and sat down.
I longed — instead of “with great delight.” For the word רָחַמַּה signifies “vehementer concupivit,” and expresses her very great desire to taste the fruit of the tree under which she sat down.

5. Support me with cups,
Around me strew apples,
For faint with love am I.

Anacreon, in a like strain, says.

Δοτε μοι, δοτ', ὦ γυναῖκες
Βρομὶς πλεῖν ἀμύσσει·
Ἵπο καυματος γὰρ ἤδη
Προποθεὶς ἀναστεναζῶ.
Δοτε δ' ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων·
Στεφανὸς δ' οἷός &c.

Ode xxi.

Damsels I faint,
Haste, bring me wine,
Flowers around
My temples twine,

9. Sparkling — instead of “shewing himself.” The word נִצָּץ signifies “to sparkle,” and expresses a great deal more than merely “shewing himself:” to her eyes her lover seemed sparkling as a diamond.

10. My

N O T E S.

10. My beloved answered. Solomon heard her exclamation, when she cried out, ^{Behold} **Lo!** &c; and in answer, spoke.

14. In a hollow of the precipice—instead of “in the secret places of the stairs.” **רֶרֶג** means, “a precipice.” In the dark caves and hollows of the precipice.

17. Till the day breathe—instead of “till the day break.” **נִוַּח** signifies “to breathe;” the idea is poetical, and ought to be preserved: Milton has the same.

Sweet is the breath of morn.

Par. Lost. iv. 641.

T H I R D C H A P T E R.

VERSE 4. I would not let him go,

Till I had led him into the house of my mother.

It hath been supposed, that this poem was written by Solomon on his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. But this passage seems to prove, that the person here married was not Pharaoh's daughter; for if she had been Pharaoh's daughter, her mother's house would have been in Egypt; whereas this scene lies at Jerusalem; for in the next line she addresses the daughters of Jerusalem, and desires them not to disturb her sleeping husband.

8. All of them, men of the sword.

I am inclined to think that **כֻּלָּם אֲחֻזֵּי חֶרֶב** does not mean “they all hold swords,” for in the next line every one of them is said to have “his sword by his thigh,” but holders, possessors of the sword, that is, warriors.

Thus **רֹעֵה צֹאן** though literally, “feeding sheep,” means, a “feeder of sheep,” Gen. iv. 2.

K

FOURTH

N O T E S.

F O U R T H C H A P T E R.

VERSE 1. Browse about mount Gilead—instead of “from mount Gilead.” מ does not only signify “from” it signifies also “near, by, about, &c.”

מִהַר חוֹרֵב by the mount Horeb, Exod. xxxiii. 6. And the children of Israel stript themselves of their ornaments “by the mount Horeb.”

2. All of which have twins,

And none among them is bereaved.

“Bereaved,” instead of “barren.” The word שְׂכֵלָה signifying, not barren, but bereaved. אֶפְגַּשְׁם כְּדֹב שָׁכֹל I will meet them as a bear “bereaved” of her whelps. Hof. xiii. 8.

Her teeth are compared to a flock of sheep, accompanied each by two lambs.

The comparison will be found exact, if we recollect, that the teeth are of unequal heights; the incisors, or front teeth, being somewhat lower than the canine: and that the former, are generally eight in number, the latter, four.

9. At once—instead of “with one.” In eighteen of the collated copies, instead of the word בְּאַחַד we find בְּאַחַת, that is, “at once” instead of “with one.” A false reading, in this place, was naturally to be suspected, it being ludicrous to say, that she ravished his heart with one eye.

Anacreon was thus smitten by his mistress's eyes.

Οὐχ ἵππος ὤλεσεν με
Οὐ πέζος, ἔχινος
Στρατός δὲ καινὸς ἄλλος,
Ἀπ' ὀμμάτων βαλὼν με.

Ode xvi.

11. Thy

N O T E S.

11. Thy lips distil honey from the comb.

Homer and Theocritus have the same idea.

Τὰ καὶ ἀπο γλῶσσης μελιτος γλυκιῶν ῥέειν αὐδῇ.

Iliad. i. 249.

————— ἐκ στομάτων δὲ

Ἑρρεῖ μοι φωνα γλυκερώτερα ἢ μελικηρῶ.

Theoc. Id. xx. 26.

13. Thy branches. That is, the children who shall spring from thee.

16. Let it's fragrance go forth—instead of “that the spices thereof may flow out.”

בשמים signifies, it is true, “spices.” But I imagine, by a poetical license, the word is here meant to signify, “the sweet odours of spices.” She seems to call upon the gales, to blow out, not the spices themselves, but their sweet odours. In 2 Chron. xvi. 14. and Esther ii. 12. the word is translated “sweet odours.”

N O T E S.

F I F T H C H A P T E R.

VERSE 2.

קול דודי דופק
פתחי לי אחתי
רעייתי יונתי חמתי
שראשי נמלא טל
קוצותי רסיסי לילה :

The voice of my beloved knocking !
Open to me, my sister,
My friend, my dove, my perfect one :
For my head is covered with dew,
My hair, with the drops of night.

A passage in Anacreon is so similar to this, that it seems, I think,
to bear the marks of imitation.

Μεσονυκτιοις ποθ' ὥραις,
Στρεφεταί ὅτ' Ἀρκτος ἤδη
Κατὰ χεῖρα τὴν βοῶτεω,
Μεροπῶν δὲ φυλα πάντα
Κεαταὶ κοπῶ δαμυνταί,
Τοτ' Ἔρως ἐπισταθεὶς μεν
Θυρεῶν ἐκοπ' ὀχῆας·
Τίς, ἔφην, θύρας ἀραῶσαι;
Κατὰ μεν χισσεῖς ὄνειρος.
Ὁ δ' Ἔρως, ἀνοιγε, φησι,
Βρεφός εἰμι, μὴ φοβήσῃ·
Βρέχομαι δὲ, καὶ σελήνον
Κατὰ νύκτα πέπλανημαι.

Ἐλεῖσα

N O T E S.

Ἐλεησα ταυτ' ἀκυσσας·
 Ἄνα δ' εὐθυ λυχνον ἀψας,
 Ἀνεώζα.
 Παλαμαιοι χειρας αὐτῃ
 Ἀνεθαλπον, ἐκ δὲ χαιτης
 Ἀπεθλιβον ὑγρον ὕδωρ.

Ode III.

At that still hour when mortal eyes
 In deepest sleep were bound,
 When now beneath Bootes' hand
 The Bear was turning round,

Cupid came, and loudly rapp'd.
 I cried, who comes thus late?
 Who thus, my gentle dreams disturbs,
 By beating at the gate?

Said Cupid, fear not; 'tis a child
 Who having lost his way,
 Has wander'd much, is cold and wet:
 O, let me in, I pray.

I rose, and gave him entrance, mov'd
 To pity by his prayer;
 Warm'd his cold hands in mine, and squeez'd
 The dew-drops from his hair.

Thus, as in the one passage,
 Solomon comes in the night time—raps at the door—begs for admission—complains of being wet—she rises to let him in,

L

So,

N O T E S.

So, in the other,

Cupid comes in the night time—raps at the door—begs for admission—complains of being wet—Anacreon rises to let him in.

It is observable that as they both stand knocking at the door, so do they both, while there, plead for pity and admission in the same way. Solomon by saying,

For my head is covered with dew
My hair with the drops of night,

Cupid by saying, *Βρεχομαι*, I am wet: his hair was so, for Anacreon upon admitting him, squeezes out of it the dripping dew.

We cannot, I think, read the two passages without being struck with the similarity; and fancying, that if Anacreon ever read this poem, he drew from it some of the outlines of his ode.

That Anacreon might have seen the poem, is possible; for it was written between four and five hundred years before his time; and some copies of it might have been abroad when he wrote.

N. B. In the translation, instead of “My head,” read, “For my head.”

10. Distinguishable among ten thousand,
like him who carrieth the banners.

לגד signifies, to raise the banners. She seems by this expression to mean that he surpasses others, is as much distinguishable from the rest of mankind, as he who carries the banners, is more conspicuous in an army, than any other individual.

11. His head is as finest gold,
His clustering locks are jetty as the raven.

In the hair described by Anacreon there is also a mixture of, golden and black.

N O T E S.

Λιπαράς κόμας ποιήσον,
Τὰ μὲν ἐνδοθεν μελαινας
Τὰ δ' ἐς ἄκρον ἡλιώσας.

Ode xxix.

Ovid unites the same colours in his description of hair.

Nec tamen ater erat, nec erat color aureus illis,
Sed quamvis neuter mixtus uterque color.

Am. El. xiv. 9.

Tho' neither black, nor golden was her hair,
Yet black and golden, both, united were.

12. And dwell amongst the ripe corn.

We find the word מֵלֶאכֶר *Exod. xxii. 29.* Thou shalt not delay to offer "the first of thy ripe fruits." Or, according to the Septuagint Ἀπαρχὰς ἀλωνος. "The first of thy threshing floor." By which the word appears to mean "ripe corn."

יָשַׁב signifies, manfit. So that the passage instead of "and fitly fet" should be translated "and dwell amongst the ripe corn."

13. Liquid myrrh. עֵבֶר cannot, I think, properly be translated "sweet smelling." 1 Sam. xxix. 2. וְסֵרְנֵי פִלְשְׁתִּים עֲבָרִים לְמֵאוֹת. And the lords of the Philistines "passed on" by hundreds.

The word signifies therefore "to move, to pass on." And when applied to myrrh, seems to mean, myrrh before it is hardened into a gum, yet dropping and issuing from the tree. With myrrh in this state, he seems to have smeared the hafts of the bolt. Ch. v. 5.

N O T E S.

S I X T H C H A P T E R.

VERSE 8. There are sixty queens,
And eighty concubines.

The number, we find, at another period, was considerably greater.
1 Kings xi. 3.

9. Delight of her mother. אחת signifies "one." I apprehend, in this place, it means "the favourite one" of her mother. An only child is expressed by יחיד Gen. xxii. 12, 16. Judges xi. 34. She speaks of a sister, Ch. viii. 8.

10. Who is she that is seen like the morning.

The nuptial celebrity among the Hebrews usually lasted seven days. A division, answering to that number of days, is observable in this poem.

The Bishop of London informs us, in his thirtieth discourse on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, that the seven days are thus marked out by Bossuet.

Ch. Ver.

First day begins at	I. - - 1.
Second - - - - -	II. - 7.
Third - - - - -	III. - 1.
Fourth - - - - -	V. - - 2.
Fifth - - - - -	VI. 10.
Sixth - - - - -	VII. 12.
Seventh - - - - -	VIII. 4.

It is on the Queen's appearance on the morning of the fifth day, that the Chorus says,

מי זאת הנשקפה כמו שחר
יפה כלבנה ברה כחמה

Who is she that is seen like the morning,
Beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun?

12. My

N O T E S.

12. My loyal people. In a great number of manuscripts, instead of עמי נדיב in one word, we find it written thus in two, עמי נדיב. If we take the former reading it is, the chariots "of Amminadib." Some proverbial expression perhaps, for "speed." If we take the latter, it is, the chariots "of my willing people." Methought there were drawn out for me, or "my soul placed for me," the chariots of my willing people, who zealous to serve me, thus enabled me to fly with speed to the Shulamite.

Shulamite. Some have supposed this word to mean, the wife of Solomon. The one name being spelt thus שלמה, the other thus שולמית.

13. As the trumpet. The word מַחֲלֵת signifies a musical instrument: we cannot perhaps say positively what this instrument was: but if it was used in armies to give signal of battle, it was probably a trumpet. That it was a musical instrument appears in the titles of Psalm liii, and lxxxi.

Ibid. Stand ready for battle. The word here is הַמַּחֲכִים which signifies "acies." Instead therefore of "as it were the company of two armies" it is to be rendered, I think, "she is as the trumpet, or as the sound of the trumpet, when armies stand ready for battle." That is, she is "awe-striking." As was before said of her.

Awe-striking, or awful; this Homer says of Nauficæa, and Milton, of Eve.

I approach thee thus, and gaze
Infatiate ——— nor have fear'd
Thy "awful" brow.

Par. Lost. ix. 537.

Σεβας μ' ἔχει εἰσπορώντα.

Hom. Od. vi. 161.

I am struck with awe beholding thee.

N O T E S.

S E V E N T H C H A P T E R.

VERSE 1. How beautiful are thy feet
In sandals, O royal daughter!

In these times, the sandal seems to have been a part of the dress, that was particularly elegant and ornamental.

Homer, who lived but a very few years after Solomon, often speaks of the sandal, and almost as often, annexes to it the Epithet *καλα*.

Καλα πιδίλα

Beautiful sandals.

4. Thy neck is a pillar of ivory. Anacreon represents Bathyllus's neck of ivory.

Ἐλεφαντινὸς τραχηλός.

Ode xxix.

5. And the hair of thy head is like purple. Anacreon desires that his mistress may be represented with purple hair.

ὑπο πορφύραισι χαιταῖς

Ἐλεφαντινὸν μετώπον.

Ode xxviii.

If human hair was ever purple, we may reasonably conclude, that purple, then, was not that same colour, which we call purple, now.

Pancirollus, speaking of the purple of the ancients, informs us, that it was produced from the vein of a shell fish; which vein, being boiled with the blood, produced a colour between red and black. This seems to be the colour which we call auburne; for red and
black

N O T E S.

black mixed together yield a brown; and Dr. Johnson informs us, that auburne, is a brown, of a tan colour.

His auburne locks on either shoulder flow'd.

Dryden.

This is exactly the colour described by Ovid, and before taken notice of in Note Ch. v. 10.

Nec tamen ater erat, nec erat color aureus illis,

Sed quamvis neuter, mixtus uterque color.

Qualem clivosæ madidis in vallibus Idæ

Ardua derepto cortice cedrus habet.

Ov. Am. El. xiv. 9.

5. The King is held captive in it's flowing tresses—instead of, “The King is held in the galleries.” For רחט the radix of this substantive signifies “cucurrit” which expression when applied to the hair, seems to denote it's waving, and flowing loosely over the shoulders.

8. The fragrance of thy face—instead of the fragrance of “thy nose.” For in several of the manuscripts we find אפֿיך instead of אפֿך.

9. That passeth down sweetly and well. The passage is thus translated in the English Bible. “And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly.”

I am inclined to think that לִדְוִי does not in this place mean, “for my beloved.”

The word דְּוִי occurs frequently in this song, and is always applied to him. But in this place it cannot be applied to him: for it is he who speaks; and he cannot call himself “my beloved.” Neither can it be applied to her: for it would then be in the feminine gender; whereas here, it is in the masculine, if the word be an Adjective. I am hence induced to believe that it is no Adjective, but a Substantive; the plural of דְּוִי amor; and signifying with it's prefix

N O T E S.

prefix Lamed, "ad amores—delightfully," in the same way as the next word למישרום "ad rectitudines" signifies "rightly."

10. I am my beloved's, and to him obedient is my will.
In the Bible translation of this passage the words are, "and his desire is towards me."

The word תשוקה here translated "desire" occurs in Gen. iii. 16. and there also, is translated "desire."

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy "desire" shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Again, in Gen. iv. 7. we meet with the same word, in a passage relating to Cain and Abel; and there also, it is translated "desire." And unto thee shall be his "desire," and thou shalt rule over him.

Now instead of "desire," I think, the word should have been translated "dependence, or obedience."

For among the derivatives from שוק and שקק, which are intermixed, we find the following.

שוק a street, where people are continually moving to and fro.

Prov. vii. 8. sub שוק appetere.

משק running to and fro. Is. xxxiii. 4. Or as in about thirty mss.

שוקק sub שקק discurrere.

בן-משק The son of running to and fro, "the steward." Gen. xv. 2.

Hence in the passages before us, the sense of the word seems to be "submission, running to and fro to serve, dependence, obedience of will, subjection."

And thus in Gen. iii. 16. it is understood by Milton.

Children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule.

Par. Lost. x. 193.

N O T E S.

Ibid. To him obedient is my will—instead of “his towards me.” In one manuscript instead of ועלי we find ועלין, and in three, instead of תשוקתו we find תשוקתי. Which readings seem rightly to agree with the construction given in the preceding note, and are therefore adopted in the translation.

11. Let us lodge in the villages.

In the morning let us go to the vineyards,
See whether the vine shoot,
The little grape appear, the pomegranates flourish.

Similar is a passage in Milton.

Fair confort! th' hour
Of night, and all things now retir'd to rest,
Mind us of like repose.
To morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,
And at our pleasant labour, to reform
Yon flow'ry arbors, yonder allies green.
Those blossoms also and those dropping gums
That lie bestrown unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance.

Par. Lost. iv. 610.

N O T E S.

E I G H T H C H A P T E R.

VERSE 2. Talmadni my mother. The word occurring in this place is תלמדני, which in the Greek translation, or Septuagint as it is called, (improperly, for the LXXII translated only the five books of Moses. See Prideaux. ninth edition, Vol. III. p. 64.) is rendered, καὶ εἰς ταμειὸν ᾧ συλλαβίσσης με exactly in the same words as the whole line ואל חדר הורתי Ch. iii. 4. is rendered.

But this apparently must be a mistake: for it is impossible that the single word תלמדני can comprise so complex a meaning.

In our English Bible the word is translated "who would instruct me." But how is this connected with the sense, and in what is she to be instructed?

The passage runs, "I will lead you into my mother's house, and will entertain you with spiced wine."

The words "who would instruct me" after "my mother's house" encumber the sense, and seem not intelligible.

Neither will the passage be mended if we translate the word, "you would instruct me." For תלמד, if a verb, is either of the second person masculine, or third person feminine.

We find in Kennicott the following various readings.

תלמירני—תחבקני—תלמדנו—תלמדני

Of these, תחבקני seems best to accord with the tenor of the sense. But to the admission of it, as the true and authentic word, an objection lies: for it is found only in one copy, and there, not certainly, in the hand writing of the first transcriber. Add to this, the
word

N O T E S.

word properly occurs in the next verse : and whether, standing there the last in the line, as the word under consideration does in this, and being also somewhat similar to it in form

תלמדני

תחבקני

it might have caught the transcriber's eye, and so was by mistake copied into this line, I cannot say : but that is possible.

Upon the whole, I am myself of opinion, that תלמדני the word received into all the best editions, is indeed the right one ; but that it is a proper name, the name of her mother. The husband's name is mentioned ; for what reason, as the mother is spoken of, may not her name be mentioned also ?

If this be allowed, the difficulty vanishes : and it may seem a further proof (See Note Ch. iii. 4.) that the queen here married, was not Pharoah's daughter ; for the name of Pharaoh's queen was תחפניס Kings xi. 19. Tahpenes.

But upon this perhaps no great stress is to be laid, because as polygamy in these times prevailed, Pharaoh might have had other queens : in Egypt, the priests alone being restricted to one wife.

4. בצבאות או באילות השדה

By the roes and the hinds of the field.

This line is not in the Bible translation, nor in any editions of the Hebrew Bible that I have seen ; but it is found in several of the manuscripts collated by Kennicott, and seems to belong to the passage.

5. There was she in travail, she brought thee forth.

Instead of " there she brought thee forth that bare thee."

חבלה parturiit ילדתך peperit te. Cicero. Utinam aliquando dolor Populi Romani " pariat," quad jamdiu " parturit." May " bring forth" what it has long been " in travail with."

6. The

N O T E S.

6. The flame of God—instead of “which hath a most vehement flame,” as in a hundred and twenty four manuscripts and editions we find *שלהבתיה* instead of *שלהבת יה*.

7. Against love. Instead of “for love.” *ב* signifying “against” as well as “for.” *באבן* Psalm xci. 12. lest thou dash thy foot “against” a stone.

Ibid. Men would utterly despise him. *בוז יבוז לו* contemnendo contemnerent eum. Instead of “it would utterly be contemned.” A substantive plural signifying “men” is to be understood before the verb, *יבוז*. As in Proverbs vi. 30. *לא יבוז* “men do not despise.”

9. Against her—instead of “upon her.” *עליה*.
ובנית מצור עליהעיר Deut. xx. 20. And thou shalt build bulwarks “against” the city.



INDEX

I N D E X

As some of the chapters of this Song are divided differently, in different editions of the Hebrew Bible, it is proper to be mentioned, that this index is drawn up from Dr. Kennicott's edition.

א	א	א
אביאך 8, 2.	אחזה 7, 9.	איש 3, 8. 8, 7.
אבקשה 3, 2.	אחזו 2, 15.	8, 11.
אבקת 3, 6.	אחזי 3, 8.	אכלו 5, 1.
אגוז 6, 11.	אחזתיו 3, 4.	אכלתי 5, 1.
אגן 7, 3.	אחר 2, 9.	אל 1, 6. 2, 4.
אדני 5, 15.	אחריו 1, 4.	3, 4. 4, 6.
אהבה 2, 4. 2, 5.	אחת 6, 9.	6, 11. 7, 3.
3, 10. 5, 8.	אחתי 4, 9. 4, 10.	8, 2.
7, 7. 8, 6.	4, 12. 5, 1.	אלבשנה 5, 3.
אהבוך 1, 3. 1, 4.	5, 2.	אלך 4, 6.
אהיה 1, 7.	אטנפם 5, 3.	אלף 4, 4. 8, 11.
או 2, 7. 2, 9.	איכה 1, 7.	אם 1, 8. 2, 7.
2, 17. 3, 5.	איכבה 5, 3.	3, 5. 5, 8.
8, 14.	אימה 6, 4. 6, 10.	7, 13. 8, 7.
אז 8, 10.	אין 4, 2. 4, 7. 6,	8, 9.
אהות 8, 8.	6, 6, 8. 8, 8.	אמו 3, 11.

O

I N D E X

א

אמי 1, 6. 3, 4.
 8, 1. 8, 2.
 אמך 8, 5.
 אמן 7, 2.
 אמנה 4, 8.
 אמצאך 8, 1.
 אמרתי 7, 9.
 אנה 6, 1.
 אנהגך 8, 2.
 אני 1, 5. 2, 1.
 2, 5. 5, 2.
 5, 5. 5, 6.
 5, 8. 6, 3.
 7, 11. 8, 10.
 אסור 7, 6.
 אעלה 7, 9.
 אף 1, 16.
 אפיקי 5, 12.
 אפך 7, 5. 7, 9.
 אפריון 3, 9.
 אקומה 3, 2.
 ארגמן 3, 10.
 ארז 8, 9.
 ארזים 1, 17.
 אריות 4, 8.
 אריתי 5, 1.
 ארפנו 3, 4.
 אש 8, 6.
 אשכל 1, 14.
 אשךק 8, 1. 8, 2.

א

אשר 1, 1.
 את 1, 6. 1, 8.
 2, 7. 2, 14.
 3, 1. 3, 2.
 3, 3. 3, 4.
 3, 5. 5, 3.
 5, 7. 5, 8.
 6, 4. 7, 13.
 8, 4. 8, 7.
 8, 11. 8, 12.
 אתי 4, 8.
 אתכם 2, 7. 3, 5.
 5, 8. 8, 4.
 אחן 7, 13.

ב

בא 2, 8.
 באבי 6, 11.
 באהבה 8, 7.
 באחד 4, 9.
 באילות 2, 7. 3, 5.
 באר 4, 15.
 בארץ 2, 12.
 בארצנו 2, 12.
 באשישות 2, 5.
 באתי 5, 1.
 בבעל 8, 11.
 בגנים 6, 2. 8, 13.
 בדברו 5, 6.

ב

בה 8, 8.
 בהם 4, 2. 6, 6.
 בוז 8, 7.
 בחגוי 2, 14.
 בחוץ 8, 1.
 בחור 5, 15.
 בחלב 5, 12.
 בחרוים 1, 10.
 בחשבון 7, 5.
 בטנך 7, 3.
 בי 1, 6.
 ביום 3, 11. 8, 8.
 בין 1, 13. 2, 2.
 2, 3.
 בית 2, 4. 3, 4.
 8, 2.
 ביתו 8, 7.
 בד 1, 4. 4, 7.
 7, 1.
 בכפרים 7, 12.
 בכרמי 1, 14.
 בלילות 3, 1. 3, 8.
 במלך 3, 11.
 במסבו 1, 12.
 בנוי 4, 4.
 בנות 1, 5. 2, 7.
 3, 5. 3, 11.
 5, 8. 5, 16.
 6, 9. 8, 4.
 בני 1, 6.

I N D E X

ב

בנעלים 7, 2.
 בנשים 1, 8. 5, 9.
 6, 1.
 בסנסניו 7, 9.
 בסתר 2, 14.
 בעטרה 3, 11.
 בעיניו 8, 10.
 בעיר 3, 2. 3, 3.
 5, 7.
 בעצי 2, 3.
 בעקבי 1, 8.
 בפריו 8, 11.
 בצבאות 2, 7. 3, 5.
 בצהרים 1, 7.
 בצלו 2, 3.
 בקשתי 3, 1.
 בקשתיהו 5, 6.
 בקשתיו 3, 1. 3, 2.
 ברה 6, 9. 6, 10.
 ברהטים 7, 6.
 ברותים 1, 17.
 ברח 8, 14.
 ברכבי 1, 9.
 ברכות 7, 5.
 בשולמית 7, 1.
 בשוקים 3, 2.
 בשושנים 2, 16. 4, 5.
 6, 3. 7, 3.
 בשמי 5, 1.
 בשמיו 4, 16.

ב

בשמים 4, 10. 4, 14.
 8, 14.
 בת 7, 2. 7, 5.
 בתורים 1, 10.
 בתינו 1, 17.
 בתמר 7, 9.
 בתענוגים 7, 7.
 בתפוחים 2, 5.
 בתר 2, 17.
 בתרשיש 5, 14.

ג

גבעת 4, 6.
 גברים 3, 7.
 גדי 1, 14.
 גדיתיך 1, 8.
 גל 4, 12.
 גלילי 5, 14.
 גלעד 4, 1.
 גם 7, 14. 8, 1.
 גן 4, 12.
 גני 4, 16.
 גנים 4, 15.
 גנת 6, 11.

ד

דבש 4, 11.
 דבשי 5, 1.

ד

דגול 5, 10.
 דדיך 1, 2. 1, 4.
 4, 10.
 דובב 7, 10.
 דודה 8, 5.
 דודי 1, 13. 1, 14.
 1, 16. 2, 3.
 2, 8. 2, 9.
 2, 10. 2, 16.
 2, 17. 4, 16.
 5, 2. 5, 4.
 5, 8. 5, 10.
 5, 16. 6, 2.
 7, 12. 7, 13.
 7, 14. 8, 14.
 דודים 5, 1.
 דודך 5, 9. 6, 1.
 דויד 4, 4.
 דומה 2, 9.
 דופק 5, 2.
 דלת 8, 9.
 דמה 2, 17.
 דמיתך 1, 9.
 דמשק 7, 5.
 דמתה 7, 8.

ה

האהבה 2, 7. 3, 5.
 8, 4. 8, 7.

I N D E X

ה

האילים 2, 9. 2, 17.
 8, 14.
 האלף 8, 12.
 הביאני 1, 4. 2, 4.
 הבנות 2, 2.
 הבנים 2, 3.
 הבשם 5, 13. 6, 2.
 הגבורים 4, 4.
 הגבעות 2, 8.
 הגידה 1, 7.
 הגיע 2, 12.
 הגלעד 6, 5.
 הגפן 6, 11. 7, 9.
 7, 13.
 הגשם 2, 11.
 הדודאים 7, 14.
 ההרים 2, 8.
 הולך 7, 10.
 הון 8, 7.
 הורתי 3, 4.
 הזמיר 2, 12.
 החוחים 2, 2.
 החור 5, 4.
 החלנות 2, 9.
 החמות 5, 7.
 החרכים 2, 9.
 הטוב 7, 10.
 היא 6, 9. 8, 9.
 היה 8, 11.
 היום 2, 17. 4, 6.

ה

היושבת 8, 13.
 היים 4, 15.
 היין 2, 4.
 הייתי 8, 10.
 היער 2, 3.
 היפה 1, 8. 5, 9.
 6, 1.
 הכוני 5, 7.
 הכסף 1, 11.
 הכפר 1, 14.
 הכרם 8, 11.
 הכרמים 1, 6.
 הלבונה 4, 6.
 הלבנון 3, 9. 7, 5.
 הלך 2, 11. 6, 1.
 המגן 4, 4.
 המדבר 3, 6. 8, 5.
 המדרגה 2, 14.
 המה 6, 8.
 המו 5, 4.
 המון 8, 11.
 המור 4, 6.
 המזג 7, 3.
 המחנים 7, 1.
 המלך 1, 4. 3, 9.
 המנעול 5, 5.
 המר 1, 13.
 הנה 2, 8. 2, 9.
 2, 11. 3, 7.
 הנחל 6, 11.

ה

הנך 1, 15. 1, 16.
 4, 1.
 הנצו 6, 11. 7, 13.
 הנצנים 2, 12.
 הנשקפה 6, 10.
 הסבבים 3, 3. 5, 7.
 הסבי 6, 5.
 הסהר 7, 3.
 הסלע 2, 14.
 הסמדר 7, 13.
 הסתו 2, 11.
 העזים 4, 1. 6, 5.
 העמקים 2, 1.
 הפיחי 4, 16.
 הפרחה 6, 11.
 הצאן 1, 8.
 הצללים 2, 17. 4, 6.
 הקצובות 4, 2.
 הר 4, 6.
 הראיני 2, 14.
 הרהיבני 6, 5.
 הרועה 6, 3.
 הרחלים 6, 6.
 הרחצה 4, 2. 6, 6.
 הרי 2, 17. 8, 14.
 הרמון 4, 3. 6, 7.
 הרמנים 6, 11.
 הרמונים 7, 13.
 הרעה 2, 16.
 הרעים 1, 8. 4, 5.

I N D E X

ה

הרקח 8, 2.
השבעתי 2, 7. 3, 5.
5, 8. 8, 4.
השבעתנו 5, 9.
השדה 2, 7. 3, 5.
7, 12.
השולמית 7, 1.
השירים 1, 1.
השמיעני 2, 14. 8, 13.
השמרים 3, 3. 5, 7.
השמש 1, 6.
השן 7, 5.
השני 4, 3.
השרון 2, 1.
התאנה 2, 13.
התור 2, 12.
התפוח 8, 5.

ו

ואדום 5, 10.
ואהלול 4, 14.
ואל 3, 4. 4, 6.
ואם 2, 7. 3, 5.
8, 9.
ואמר 2, 10.
ואני 2, 16.
ואסובבה 3, 2.
ואצבעתי 5, 5.
ובואי 4, 16.

ו

וביום 3, 11.
וברחבות 3, 2.
ודגלו 2, 4.
ודודי 5, 6. 6, 3.
ודלת 7, 6.
ודמה 8, 14.
והגפנים 2, 13.
וזה 5, 16.
וחכך 7, 10.
וחלב 4, 11.
וחרמון 4, 8.
ויאכל 4, 16.
ויאשרוה 6, 9.
וידי 5, 5.
ויהיו 7, 9.
ויהללוה 6, 9.
וימינו 2, 6. 8, 3.
וישבתי 2, 3.
וכלו 5, 16.
וכרכם 4, 14.
וכרמינו 2, 15.
ולא 3, 1. 3, 2.
3, 4. 5, 6.
ולבונה 3, 6.
ולבי 2, 10. 2, 13.
5, 2.
וללקט 6, 2.
ומאתים 8, 12.
ומדברך 4, 3.
ומה 7, 7. 8, 4.

P

ו

ומום 4, 7.
ומעי 5, 4.
ומראיך 2, 14.
ונאווה 1, 5.
ונבקשנו 6, 1.
ונהרות 8, 7.
ונזלים 4, 15.
ונחזה 7, 1.
ונסו 2, 17. 4, 6.
ונשמחה 1, 4.
ועל 7, 14.
ועלי 7, 11.
ועלמות 6, 8.
ופילגשים 6, 9.
ופריו 2, 3.
וקול 2, 12.
וקנמון 4, 14.
וראינה 3, 11.
וריח 4, 10. 4, 11.
7, 9.
ורמה 8, 14.
ורעי 1, 8.
ושדי 8, 10.
ושדיך 7, 8.
ושדים 8, 8.
ושכלה 4, 2. 6, 6.
ושכרו 5, 1.
ושמנים 6, 8.

I N D E X

ז

זאת 3, 6. 6, 10.
7, 8. 8, 5.
זה 2, 8. 2, 9.
5, 16.
זהב 1, 11. 3, 10.
5, 14.
זרועך 8, 6.

ח

חבלה 8, 5.
חבלתך 8, 5.
חבצלת 2, 1.
חברך 1, 7.
חברים 8, 13.
חדר 3, 4.
חדריו 1, 4.
חדשים 7, 14.
חולת 2, 5.
חומה 8, 9. 8, 10.
חטים 7, 3.
חכו 5, 16.
חלאים 7, 2.
חלבי 5, 1.
חלף 2, 11.
חמדתי 2, 3.
חמוקי 7, 2.
חמק 5, 6.
חנטה 2, 13.
חרב 3, 8.

ח

חרבו 3, 8.
חתום 4, 12.
חתנתו 3, 11.

ט

טבו 4, 10.
טובים 1, 2. 1, 3.
טירת 8, 9.
טל 5, 2.

,

יבא 4, 16. 8, 11.
יבוז 8, 7.
יבז 8, 1.
ידו 5, 4.
ידי 7, 2.
ידיו 5, 14.
ידעתי 6, 12.
יה 8, 6.
יוכלו 8, 7.
יונים 1, 15. 4, 1.
יוגק 8, 1.
יונתי 2, 14. 5, 2.
6, 9.
יזלו 4, 16.
יחסר 7, 3.
יני 5, 1.
ילדתך 8, 5.

,

ילין 1, 13.
יערי 5, 1.
יפה 1, 15. 1, 16.
4, 1. 4, 7.
6, 4. 6, 10.
יפו 4, 10. 7, 2.
יפית 7, 7.
יפתי 2, 10. 2, 13.
יצאה 5, 6.
ירד 6, 2.
ירדתי 6, 11.
ירושלם 1, 5. 2, 7.
3, 5. 3, 10.
5, 8. 5, 16.
8, 4.
ירכו 3, 8.
ירכיך 7, 2.
ישבות 5, 12.
ישטפה 8, 7.
ישנה 5, 2.
ישנים 7, 10. 7, 14.
ישקני 1, 2.
ישראל 3, 7.
יתן 8, 7.
יתנך 8, 1.

כ

כאהלי 1, 5.
כאח 8, 1.

I N D E X

כ

כארגמן 7, 6.
 כארזים 5, 15.
 כאשכלות 7, 9.
 כחוט 4, 3.
 כחותם 8, 6.
 כחמה 6, 10.
 כי 1, 2. 2, 5.
 2, 11. 2, 14.
 8, 6.
 כיונים 5, 12.
 כיין 7, 10.
 כירושלם 6, 4.
 כיריעות 1, 5.
 ככרמל 7, 6.
 כל 4, 4. 4, 14.
 7, 14. 8, 7.
 כלבנה 6, 10.
 כלבנון 5, 15.
 כלה 4, 8. 4, 9.
 4, 10. 4, 11.
 4, 12. 5, 1.
 כלך 4, 7.
 כלם 3, 8.
 כמגדל 4, 4. 7, 5.
 כמגדלות 8, 10.
 כמו 6, 10. 7, 2.
 כמוצאת 8, 10.
 כמות 8, 6.
 כמחלת 7, 1.

כ

כמעט 3, 4.
 כן 1, 3. 2, 2.
 2, 3.
 כנדגלות 6, 4. 6, 10.
 כסף 3, 10. 8, 9.
 8, 11.
 כעדר 4, 1. 4, 2.
 6, 5. 6, 6.
 כעורב 5, 11.
 כעטיה 1, 7.
 כערוגות 5, 13.
 כפות 5, 5.
 כפלה 4, 3. 6, 7.
 כפרים 4, 13.
 כריח 4, 11.
 כרם 8, 11.
 כרמי 1, 6. 8, 12.
 כרמים 2, 15.
 כשאל 8, 6.
 כשושנה 2, 2.
 כשני 4, 5. 7, 4.
 כתימרות 3, 6.
 כתלנו 2, 9.
 כתם 5, 11.
 כתנתי 5, 3.
 כתפוח 2, 3.
 כתפוחים 7, 9.
 כתרצה 6, 4.

ל

לא 1, 6. 1, 8.
 6, 12. 8, 1.
 8, 7.
 לאחותנו 8, 8.
 לאמה 6, 9.
 לאשכלות 7, 8.
 לבבתני 4, 9.
 לבו 3, 11.
 לבונה 4, 14.
 לבך 8, 6.
 לבנון 4, 11. 4, 15.
 לגנו 4, 16. 6, 2.
 לגני 5, 1.
 לדודי 5, 5.
 5, 6. 6, 3.
 7, 10. 7, 11.
 לה 3, 7. 8, 8.
 לו 2, 11. 2, 16.
 3, 9. 3, 11.
 5, 8. 8, 7.
 לוח 8, 9.
 לחיו 5, 13.
 לחיך 1, 10.
 לחכי 2, 3.
 לי 1, 7. 1, 13.
 1, 14. 2, 10.
 2, 16. 4, 6.
 5, 2. 6, 3.
 8, 1.

I N D E X

ל

ליולדתה 6, 9.
 לילה 5, 2.
 לך 1, 8. 1, 11.
 2, 10. 2, 13.
 2, 16. 2, 17.
 7, 13. 7, 14.
 8, 12. 8, 14.
 לכבות 8, 7.
 לכה 7, 12.
 לכי 2, 13.
 לכרמים 7, 13.
 למישרים 7, 10.
 לנו 2, 15. 8, 8.
 לנטרים 8, 11. 8, 12.
 לססתי 1, 9.
 לעפר 2, 9. 2, 17.
 8, 14.
 לערוגות 6, 2.
 לפני 8, 12.
 לפתח 5, 5.
 לצבי 2, 9. 2, 17.
 8, 14.
 לצמתך 4, 1. 4, 3.
 6, 7.
 לקולך 8, 13.
 לראות 6, 11.
 לראשי 2, 6.
 לריח 1, 3.
 לרעות 6, 2.
 לשונך 4, 11.

ל

לשלמה 1, 1. 8, 11.
 לתלפיות 4, 4.
 לתמר 7, 8.

מ

מבנות 3, 10.
 מבעד 4, 1. 4, 3.
 6, 7.
 מגברי 3, 7.
 מגדיו 4, 16.
 מגדים 4, 13. 7, 14.
 מגדלות 5, 13.
 מדוד 5, 9.
 מדלג 2, 8.
 מה 4, 10. 5, 8.
 5, 9. 7, 1.
 7, 2. 7, 7.
 8, 4. 8, 8.
 מהם 3, 4.
 מהר 4, 1.
 מהררי 4, 8.
 מור 5, 5. 5, 13.
 מורי 5, 1.
 מחבלים 2, 15.
 מחמדים 5, 16.
 מטתו 3, 7.
 מי 3, 6. 6, 10.
 8, 1. 8, 5.
 מיין 1, 2. 1, 4.

מ

מיין 4, 10. 8, 2.
 מים 4, 15. 5, 12.
 8, 7.
 מיסדים 5, 15.
 מישרים 1, 4.
 מכל 3, 6. 4, 10.
 מלאת 5, 12.
 מלבנון 4, 8.
 מלחמה 3, 8.
 מלך 7, 6.
 מלכות 6, 8. 6, 9.
 מלמדי 3, 8.
 ממלאים 5, 14.
 ממענות 4, 8.
 ממתקים 5, 16.
 מן 2, 9. 3, 6.
 4, 2. 4, 15.
 5, 4. 6, 5.
 6, 6. 8, 5.
 מנגדי 6, 5.
 מנשיקות 1, 2.
 מספר 6, 8.
 מעיו 5, 14.
 מעין 4, 12. 4, 15.
 מעיניך 4, 9.
 מעלי 5, 7.
 מעלפת 5, 14.
 מעסים 8, 2.
 מעצי 3, 9.
 מעשה 7, 2.

I N D E X

מ

מפחד 3, 8.
מצאוני 3, 3.
מצאני 5, 7.
מצאתיהו 5, 6.
מצאתיו 3, 1. 3, 2.
מצורניך 4, 9.
מציץ 2, 9.
מקטרת 3, 6.
מקפץ 2, 8.
מקשיבים 8, 13.
מר 3, 6. 4, 14.
מראהו 5, 15.
מראיך 2, 14.
מראש 4, 8.
מרבבך 5, 10.
מרכבו 3, 10.
מרכבות 6, 12.
מרקחים 5, 13.
משגיח 2, 9.
משכבי 3, 1.
משכנות 1, 8.
משכני 1, 4.
מתאימות 4, 2. 6, 6.
מתוק 2, 3.
מתרפקת 8, 5.

נ

נא 3, 2. 7, 9.
נאוה 2, 14. 4, 3.

נ

נאוה 6, 4.
נאו 1, 10.
נבנה 8, 9.
נגילה 1, 4.
נדיב 6, 12. 7, 2.
נזכירה 1, 4.
נחרו 1, 6.
נטפו 5, 5.
נטפות 5, 13.
נטרה 1, 6.
נטרתי 1, 6.
נלינה 7, 12.
נמלא 5, 2.
נמרים 4, 8.
נעול 4, 12.
נעים 1, 16.
נעמת 7, 7.
נעשה 1, 11. 8, 8.
נפשי 1, 7. 3, 1.
3, 2. 3, 3.
3, 4. 5, 6.
6, 12.
נפת 4, 11.
נצא 7, 12.
נצור 8, 9.
נקדות 1, 11.
נראה 7, 13.
נראו 7, 12.
נרד 4, 14.
נרדי 1, 12.

Q

נ

נרדים 4, 13.
נרוצה 1, 4.
נשאו 5, 7.
נשכימה 7, 13.
נשמע 2, 12.
נתן 1, 12. 8, 11.
נתנו 2, 13. 7, 14.

ס

סב 2, 17.
סביב 3, 7.
סוגה 7, 3.
סמדר 2, 13. 2, 15.
סמכוני 2, 5.
ספירים 5, 14.

ע

עבר 2, 11. 5, 5.
5, 6. 5, 13.
עד 1, 12. 2, 7.
2, 17. 3, 4.
3, 5. 4, 6.
8, 4.
עדרי 1, 7.
עומד 2, 9.
עורי 4, 16.
עוררתך 8, 5.
עזה 8, 6.

I N D E X

ע

עין 1, 14.
 עיניו 5, 12.
 עיניך 1, 15. 4, 1.
 6, 5. 7, 5.
 על 1, 3. 1, 7.
 1, 8. 2, 8.
 2, 17. 3, 1.
 3, 8. 5, 5.
 5, 12. 5, 15.
 7, 5. 8, 5.
 8, 6. 8, 14.
 עלה 3, 6. 8, 5.
 עלי 2, 4.
 עליה 8, 9.
 עליו 4, 4. 5, 4.
 עליך 7, 6.
 עלמות 1, 3.
 עם 1, 11. 4, 13.
 4, 14. 5, 1.
 עמודי 5, 15.
 עמודיו 3, 10.
 עמי 6, 12.
 עמינדיב 6, 12.
 עמך 6, 1.
 ענה 2, 10.
 ענני 5, 6.
 ענק 4, 9.
 עפרים 4, 5. 7, 4.
 עצי 4, 14.

ע

ער 5, 2.
 ערב 2, 14.
 ערמת 7, 3.
 ערשנו 1, 16.
 עשה 3, 9. 3, 10.
 עשן 3, 6.
 עשת 5, 14.
 עת 2, 12.

פ
 פגיה 2, 13.
 פו 5, 11. 5, 15.
 פיהו 1, 2.
 פילגשים 6, 8.
 פנה 6, 1.
 פני 7, 5.
 פעמך 7, 2.
 פצעוני 5, 7.
 פרדם 4, 13.
 פרחו 7, 13.
 פרי 4, 13. 4, 16.
 פרוי 8, 12.
 פרעה 1, 9.
 פשטתי 5, 3.
 פתח 7, 13.
 פתחי 5, 2.
 פתחינו 7, 14.
 פתחתי 5, 6.

צ

צאי 1, 8.
 צאינה 3, 11.
 צביה 4, 5. 7, 4.
 צוארך 1, 10. 4, 4.
 7, 5.
 צופה 7, 5.
 צח 5, 10.
 ציון 3, 11.
 צפון 4, 16.
 צפנתי 7, 14.
 צרור 1, 13.

ק

קדר 1, 5.
 קול 2, 8. 5, 2.
 קולך 2, 14.
 קומי 2, 10. 2, 13.
 קומתך 7, 8.
 קוצותי 5, 2.
 קוצותיו 5, 11.
 קטנה 8, 8.
 קטנים 2, 15.
 קמתי 5, 5.
 קנאה 8, 6.
 קנה 4, 14.
 קראתיו 5, 6.
 קרות 1, 17.
 קשה 8, 6.

I N D E X

ר

ראווה 6, 9.
 ראיתם 3, 3.
 ראשו 5, 11.
 ראשי 4, 14. 8, 3.
 ראשך 7, 6.
 רבים 7, 5. 8, 7.
 רגלי 5, 3.
 רדידי 5, 7.
 רוכל 3, 6.
 רחוטנו 1, 17.
 רחצות 5, 12.
 רחצתי 5, 3.
 ריח 2, 13. 7, 14.
 ריחו 1, 12.
 רמונים 4, 13.
 רמני 8, 2.
 רסיסי 5, 2.
 רעי 5, 16.
 רעים 5, 1.
 רעיתי 1, 9. 1, 15.
 2, 2. 2, 10.
 2, 13. 4, 1.
 4, 7. 5, 2.
 6, 4.
 רעננה 1, 16.
 רפדוני 2, 5.
 רפידתו 3, 10.
 רצוף 3, 10.
 רקתך 4, 3. 6, 7.
 רשפי 8, 6.

ר

רשפיה 8, 6.

ש

שאהבה 1, 7. 3, 1.
 3, 2. 3, 3.
 3, 4.
 שאני 1, 6.
 שגלשו 4, 1. 6, 5.
 שדי 1, 13. 8, 1.
 שדיך 4, 5. 7, 4.
 7, 9.
 שהביאתיו 3, 4.
 שהם 6, 5.
 שהמלך 1, 12.
 שובי 7, 1.
 שוקיו 5, 15.
 שושנים 5, 13. 6, 2.
 שושנת 2, 1.
 שחולת 5, 8.
 שחורה 1, 5.
 שחר 6, 10.
 שחרות 5, 11.
 שחרחרת 1, 6.
 שידבר 8, 8.
 שימני 8, 6.
 שיפוח 2, 17. 4, 6.
 שיר 1, 1.
 שככה 5, 9.
 שכלם 4, 2. 6, 6.

ש

שלהבתיה 8, 6.
 שלום 8, 10.
 שלח 5, 4.
 שלחך 4, 13.
 שלטי 4, 4.
 שלי 1, 6. 8, 12.
 שלמה 1, 5. 1, 7.
 3, 9. 3, 11.
 8, 12.
 שלמתיך 4, 11.
 שלשלמה 3, 7.
 שמ 7, 13.
 שמאלו 2, 6. 8, 3.
 שמה 8, 5.
 שמחת 3, 11.
 שמך 1, 3.
 שמן 1, 3.
 שמני 1, 6.
 שמניך 1, 3. 4, 10.
 שמצאתי 3, 4.
 שמרי 5, 7.
 שמתני 6, 12.
 שן 5, 14.
 שני 4, 5. 7, 4.
 שניך 4, 2. 6, 6.
 שניר 4, 8.
 שעברתי 3, 4.
 שעטרה 3, 11.
 שעלו 4, 2. 6, 6.
 שעלים 2, 15.

I N D E X

ש

שער 7, 5.
 שערך 4, 1. 6, 5.
 שפתותיך 4, 3. 4, 11.
 שפתותיו 5, 13.
 שפתי 7, 10.
 שראשי 5, 2.
 שררד 7, 3.
 שש 5, 15.
 ששזפתני 1, 6.
 ששים 3, 7. 6, 8.
 שתו 5, 1.
 שתחפץ 2, 7. 3, 5.
 8, 4.
 שתיתי 5, 1.

ת

תאומי 4, 5.
 תאמי 7, 4.
 תבואי 4, 8.
 תגידו 5, 8.
 תדעי 1, 8.
 תוכו 3, 10.
 תורי 1, 11.
 תורק 1, 3.
 תחבקני 2, 6. 8, 3.
 תחזו 7, 1.
 תחת 2, 6. 4, 11.
 8, 3. 8, 5.
 תטפנה 4, 11.
 תימן 4, 16.

ת

תלוי 4, 4.
 תלמדני 8, 2.
 תלתלים 5, 11.
 תמצאו 5, 8.
 תמתי 5, 2. 6, 9.
 תעוררו 2, 7. 3, 5.
 תעירו 2, 7. 3, 5.
 8, 4.
 תעררו 8, 4.
 תראני 1, 6.
 תרביץ 1, 7.
 הרעה 1, 7.
 תשוקתו 7, 11.
 תשורי 4, 8.



